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OOOL & SOCIAL DRAMA.

A FAMILY STRIKE.

A Farce.

BY

T. S. DENISON.

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR, DE KALB, ILL.

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A Farce.

BY

T. S. DENISON

*Author of "Odds with the Enemy," "Initiating a Granger," "Selk Greenback,"
"Wanted: A Correspondent," "The Sparkling Cup."*

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CHARACTERS.

BLITZEN,
MRS. BLITZEN,
JULIA BLITZEN,

GUS GALLIVANT,
WILKS BLITZEN,
MARY, SERVANT,

COSTUMES.

Any clothing suited to the social standing of the wearer. Gus - stylish, and fastidiously dressed.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R means right as the actor faces the audience; L, left; C, centre.

A FAMILY STRIKE.

SCENE, MR. BLITZEN'S *parlor elegantly furnished. Julia discovered seated reading a note.*

Julia. Oh day of days! Can I believe it that this delightful Tuesday, October 9th, is the day I have awaited in such suspense? Yes it's to-day. (*Looking again at the note.*) He says Tuesday. Oh I do wish this day could be as long as the last long month has been since I parted from dear Gus at the Springs. But it will not. How provoking! that our joys must be so few and fleeting! It will be as short as those delicious evenings we spent together driving and waltzing. How they flew on the wings of—of—yes of love for I loved him from the very first. Wasn't it romantic to think that Gus should be the one to find my card case and return it to me? Of course we had to exchange cards after *that*, and then I couldn't think of being so rude as not to bow to him on the promenade the next time we met, and—well—(*Sighs*) Now he visits the city with his uncle. Ah! I wish he had come without that respected relative, for somehow I never could get acquainted with *him*. Indeed his *overpoweringly* benevolent look seemed always saying "I pity that giddy young thing." I'll have him understand I don't long for pity. I despise it. But I'll try and love him for Gus's sake.

Enter Mrs. B. R.

Mrs. B. Julia, when do you expect Mr. Gallivant?

Julia. At three. They come on the noon train.

Mrs. B. And his uncle will call with him I suppose?

Julia. I believe so. I wish he wouldn't. He wants to get acquainted with the family. So Gus says. He's a self-appointed investigation committee. Oh dear! What if his decision should be unfavorable!

Mrs. B. Don't fret my dear! I guarantee he'll find few more genteel families than this, if Mr. B. behaves himself, and *I'll take care of him*. But my dear, we've not yet got our dresses for Mrs. Newfangle's party, we must try strategy on Mr. Blitzen this time. I'll send at once and tell Mrs. Gauzeall not to present her bill till we decide about the new dresses; it *might* influence Mr. Blitzen, you know. (*Ring of door bell heard.*)

Julia. Why who can that be? (*Looks out.*) Oh dear I believe it is Mr. Shekel, and Gus is not along! (*Excitedly.*) There's some mistake. His note said at three. What shall we do?

Mrs. B. Keep cool and receive him as if he were expected. It's some eccentricity of his. But he'll not catch Mrs. Blitzen napping I think. (*Goes to door L.*)

Enter WILKS BLITZEN.

Wilks. Mrs. Blitzen, I presume.

Mrs. B. (Bowing.) We were not expecting you so soon, but our pleasure is all the greater as you can be with us longer.

Wilks. Oh the pleasure is mutual. (*Aside.*) Not expecting me. Shouldn't wonder, nobody told them I was coming.

Mrs. B. This is my daughter Julia. I presume you remember her.

Wilks. (Turns to Julia.) Yes, I remember Julia quite well. How are you Julia? I suppose you remember your uncle, although it is quite a long time since we met. (*Offers her his hand.*)

Julia. I remember you quite well, though it is some time since we met. (*Aside.*) I'll declare, he acts strangely. Calls himself "uncle" and me Julia. Its evident that he's agreed. (*Aloud.*) I'm so glad you're come.

Mrs. B. And we sincerely hope you will enjoy your visit

Wilks. Thank you. I shall, I'm sure. But first, I want to see Mr. Blitzen about some baggage, and then I'm ready to visit.

Mrs. B. I'm very sorry! He's just stepped over to the next street, but will be back in a minute.

Wilks. Then I'll go out and meet him. I want to surprise him.

Mrs. B. But you may not be able to find him. I'll send for him.

Wilks. No, I saw him, I think, as I came in. I shall have no difficulty if I wait at the corner. It will be a surprise to hail him on the street. (*Exit L.*)

Mrs. B. I should say it would surprise anybody. Why, how familiar he seems. No reserve at all. Is Gus any thing like his uncle?

Julia. I didn't use to think so. It's remarkable! He seems so sociable now. I guess I was mistaken in him. The fact is, I never saw him more than three or four times, and never spoke over a dozen words to him.

Mrs. B. It's very evident that he has made up his mind that everything is all right.

Julia. Well, I hope so, ma. I'd die if he should separate dear Gus and me. (*Exit R.*)

Mrs. B. Nonsense! What sentimental notions girls get into their heads to furnish amusement to them when they think of it in after years.

Enter SERVANT L.

Servant. Mrs. Blitzen, there's a gentlemen at the door enquiring for Miss Blitzen.

Mrs. B. Is he young or old, Mary?

Servant. He is youngish like, and tall. Looks like he might be a clerk.

Mrs. B. Then tell him Miss Blitzen can not see him to-day.
(*Exit servant L.*)

Mrs. B. These duns are a frightful bore. Why can't people wait?

Enter SERVANT L.

Servant. He says he must come in—that he had an appointment.

Mrs. B. Then tell him to come in. I'll soon dispose of him.
(*Exit servant L. Returns showing in Gus.*)

Mrs. B. (Frigidly.) Did you wish to see me, sir?

Gus. (Hesitating.) Well, yes, madam; though I called to see Miss Blitzen.

Mrs. B. She is not in sir. Besides I attend to all such affairs.

Gus. (Aside.) The deuce you do! (*Aloud.*) Madam, there must be some mistake!

Mrs. B. (Stiffly.) None at all, sir.

Gus. But Miss Julia knows that I intended to call to-day.

Mrs. B. Sir, I told you I attend to those matters.

Gus. Those matters! (*Aside.*) Thunder! I wonder if they have many such affairs.

Mrs. B. You must come to-morrow. (*Aside.*) It will never do for Mr Blitzen to see that bill for those silks.

Gus. Hang it! (*Aside.*) This is deuced queer conduct for one's intended mother-in-law. I'll try again. (*Aloud.*) Madam, there must be something—

Mrs. B. Nothing of the kind. Young man, I said you could call to-morrow. (*Aside.*) I wish he'd go. Mr. Blitzen may come at any moment.

Gus. (Aside.) By George she can't play that on me. (*Aloud.*) Madam, may I see you this afternoon? You, I presume, are Mrs. Blitzen. Can I have an interview with you.

Mrs. B. (Desperately.) Yes yes. (*Aside.*) Anything to get rid of him. Go! Go at once. Don't let Mr. Blitzen see you.

Gus. (Aside.) Oh that's it. The old man's been cutting up about it. (*Aloud.*) Very well, madam, I'll call this afternoon.

Mrs. B. Good day.

Gus. Good day. (*Bows and exits L. Mrs. B. exit R.*)

Enter BLITZEN R, seats himself, picks up paper.

Blitzen. (Reading.) ELMIRA, July 25. All trains are stopped on the Erie road. The strikers are in force, and threaten violence at Hornellsville. The Brooklyn troops are moving west cautiously. Strikers are tearing up the track in advance of the train. CHICAGO, July 25. Everything is quiet here so far, but serious trouble is threatened. 400 regulars arrived to-day.

LONDON, July 24, 2 P. M. The American strikes and riots are creating a profound sensation throughout Europe. Creating a sensation! (*Drops paper.*) Of course they will. Capital was uneasy enough

before. Now it's insane. Blow it! I believe I'd sell my "Centrals" at 75 and turn them into 4 per cents. Hanged if it don't look as if a man with money wasn't safe now-a-days. He's taxed to death; bled for all sorts of sham enterprises; called mean and lacking in public spirit if he don't subscribe freely; and then dubbed a "big-bug" or an "old aristocrat" for his pains. "Big-bug." That means he is a conspicuous prey for every ravenous old gobbler that comes along in the shape of a public enterprise. Hang enterprise! (*Enter Wilks L.*) Give me the old fashioned stage coach. It never struck.

Wilks. And the highwayman declared a monthly dividend of 100 per cent plus your valuables. Tut! tut! man you never saw a stage coach.

Blitzen. Who the deuce are you? *Wilks Blitzen*, by Jove! Why, brother, how are you? (*Cordially shakes hands.*) When did you come? Have a seat. (*Gives Wilks easy chair.*) Give an account of yourself, old fellow.

Wilks. Well, I am here on a visit of several days.

Blitzen. Good! Wife along?

Wilks. No.

Blitzen. Good again! We'll enjoy ourselves.

Wilks. What do you mean? I enjoy myself with my wife better than in anybody else's society.

Blitzen. Fudge! (*Aside.*) Wait till you get a second wife.

Wilks. I beg your pardon, Walter. Really I had forgotten that I had not seen you since your marriage. Allow me to congratulate you. She seems a very pleasant lady

Blitzen. Ah, thank you! (*Aside.*) I need consolation worse. (*Aloud.*) So you've met my wife? But where in the world, pray?

Wilks. Here, in this room. I just stepped out to meet you, but missed you entirely. Your wife and daughter gave me such a cordial reception, that I am surprised you are not happy with two such charming women.

Blitzen. *Wilks*, happiness is a grand humbug.

Wilks. Ha! ha! Not much, it ain't. There are no blanks drawn in life's lottery. If you don't draw an opera-house, you may draw an elephant.

Blitzen. An elephant! Now you've hit it. An elephant, whose trunk is a confounded Saratoga, filled with flummery and nonsense.

Wilks. Walter, don't talk about those things. How's Julia?

Blitzen. Ah, that's the trouble. (*Sadly.*) I could stand the other, but Julia, sweet girl! She is following in the wake of her worthy step-mother. It's dress, and balls, and parties, and receptions, and style till my very head is turned. I hear nothing else. Lord bless me, I don't know the names of the things on my dinner table any more. We talk French entirely. We *parley voo*. Devil take the *parley*. (*Voice heard outside R, calling, Mr. Blitzen! Mr. Blitzen!*) Hear that! They're calling me. I'm their slave! I'm liable to duty any hour of the day or night. They want money; or they want to consult about some useless article they've set their mind on; or they're diving into some infernal expense.

Wilks. Keep cool Walter. Keep cool.

Blitzen. (*Jumping up excitedly.*) It's true. I'm a ruined man. If this thing keeps up, I'll go into bankruptcy. (*Voices heard again, louder than before.*) I wish I could *strike*. It would do me good.

Wilks. I wish you could, too. Strike a bonanza, for instance, in our Colorado mine. Have you had any news from our investments in the mines?

Blitzen. Not a line. But I shall hear by to-day's mail, and I feel confident it will be good news. Our superintendent felt sure we should strike a rich lead.

Wilks. And that will be a *strike* of the right kind. It's not half so risky as the one you contemplated a few moments ago.

Blitzen. Why didn't you bring John along? I should like to see my nephew again.

Wilks. That reminds me that he stopped to greet an old chum at the corner store, and has forgotten to come. They'll talk all day, unless something's done. I'll run down and hurry him up.

Blitzen. Do, and don't forget to hurry yourself up, too. We'll have you some dinner in a few minutes.

Wilks. I shall not be gone long. Don't inaugurate that strike. Try moral suasion. Call out your reserves. (*Exit L.*)

Blitzen. Try the reserves! That's a good idea. There's a good deal of unadulterated cussedness stored up in Walt. Blitzen, and I'll see what that will effect. If a crisis must be precipitated, I hope it will be a ten strike.

Enter a SERVANT with a note which BLITZEN reads.

MR. BLITZEN. *Dear Sir:* Let us respectfully call your attention to the enclosed bill. The account has been running over one month, and you will excuse our presenting it now, as times are so very close, etc., etc.

Another bill from that confounded milliner! I paid a large one a few weeks ago, so this can't be very heavy. (*Unfolds a preposterously long bill. Reads items.*) One hat, with pompon aigrettes, \$50. *Fifty dollars for a hat!* What on earth is a pompon aigrette? 12 yds. torchon lace, @ \$10 per yd., \$120. One Jabot, \$25. One *Jabbit!* Humph! I'd like to know where they wear that? One collar, Swiss medallions, \$15. Blow me, if there isn't one article I know the name of. Fifteen dollars. That keep me in collars five years. I won't pay it! *I'll not.* They can't come that any more. I won't be bankrupted by fashion and milliners! The milliners may go to Halifax. There's need of a *strike* right here at home. I'll strike, too. If the iron ain't hot, I'll make it hot. (*Brings down his fist with a tremendous thump on the table.*)

Enter JULIA BLITZEN. R.

Julia. Pa, did you hear ma call? (*No answer.*) It is only three weeks till Mrs. Newfangle's party, and you know we must go. We shall be expected.

Blitzen. (*Savagely.*) Well, who said you couldn't go?

Julia. Why, Pa! What ails you, to-day?

Blitzen. (*Excitedly.*) Parties ail me! Fashion ails me! Mil-liner's and dressmaker's bills ail me! Flummery ails me! What in time else do you want to attack me, for Heaven's sake?

Julia. Pa! Pa! You surprise me. You are not well. Don't make yourself uneasy. You are nervous.

Blitzen. Nervous? I'm not nervous. But it would shock the nervous system of a mummy to attend all these parties and doings. I'm not going.

Julia. But the Newfangles will be offended if we absent ourselves.

Blitzen. Go! Go! If you want to.

Julia. Pa, ma and I will be so sorry to go without you. You remember you promised to go; and besides, I was to have a new dress specially for that occasion. Remember that, pa.

Blitzen. Wear one of the dresses you've got.

Julia. Why pa, I'm shocked! At this, the most select reception of the season, all the ladies will appear in *new* dresses, prepared specially for the occasion.

Blitzen. Your mother called a dress new till she'd had it a year

Enter Mrs. B. R.

Julia. Ma, he refuses to get my new dress. I can't go.

Mrs. B. Then, of course, he will refuse mine, too. Oh dear, you want us to be shabby and unworthy of you.

Blitzen. Good gracious! Has it come to this pass, that silks and laces are necessary to make a man's family respectable and worthy of him? If it has, I'll leave the country at once.

Mrs. B. Of course not to make us unworthy of you. I meant our friends. What will they say?

Blitzen. Let them say what they please. I don't see any thing especially worthy about the Newfangles. Newfangle got his money by swindling in army contracts.

Mrs. B. Don't speak so, dear. Mrs. Newfangle is such a nice woman. Think of her, she'll be so grieved. Can't we have the dresses? It's only a trifle, you know?

Blitzen. If she gets mad over that, let her get mad, that's all.

Mrs. B. But it's such a small matter, compared with our circumstances.

Blitzen. Only a trifle. Look at that. (*Seizes bill from the table and presents it to Mrs. B.*) Do you call that a trifle? I'll be ruined by trifles.

Mrs. B. (*Aside to Julia.*) How unfortunate that it should come in just now.

Mrs. B. Mr. Blitzen, possibly you may remember that when we were engaged, I spoke of the social position we were to occupy. You know I'm fond of society. That was understood, wasn't it?

Blitzen. Never fully understood till the present moment.

Mrs. B. You wished some one to bring your daughter out.

Blitzen. And you've done it, with a vengeance.

Mrs. B. Yes; I've made an accomplished lady of her. (*B. groans.*) I had some money, too. You may remember that?

Blitzen. I do. (*Aside.*) She's spent three times the amount. (*Aloud.*) But I tell you I can't afford it. Times have changed. I have an expensive lawsuit on hand.

Mrs. B. Which you and Mr. Noodle will win. Mr. Noodle is positive. But, my dear, let us not talk about the lawsuit now. You know Mr. Gallivant is coming to-day.

Blitzen. Don't mention that Gallivant, never again. I forever hear his name. Julia is eternally raving about Gallivant! Gallivant!

Julia. Oh pa, you are prejudiced against poor Augustus.

Blitzen. As I am against monkeys, and other like pests.

Mrs. B. Mr. Blitzen you are worrying over some trouble. Now I have it! It's the strike. That will soon be settled. It can't effect your securities.

Blitzen. The strike! You've guessed it, at last. I say it will effect us. It must. In fact *I've struck*.

Mrs. B. You've struck? What do you mean?

Blitzen. I mean, I've taken the most decided step of my life. I can't stand this eternal worry. *I've struck to end it.*

Mrs. B. Mercy on us! He's struck! He's ended it! Julia, dear, he's compromised in the lawsuit, as he has often threatened, and ruined us. (*Wringing her hands.*) We're ruined.

Julia. Oh pa! How could you have the heart to do such a thing, and ruin your family? And poor Gus! His uncle may object if you should fail to establish the justice of your claim in the case. Oh dear! (*Wringing her hands.*) I'm undone.

Blitzen. Oh! So I've raised a deuce of a breeze!

Mrs. B. Heartless! (*Sobbing.*)

Julia. Cruel, cruel, parent! (*They turn to R and L sobbing.*)

Blitzen. That was a ten strike for a chance shot. (*Aside.*) I'll play that as long as it will win. They've worried me enough.

Enter WILKS L.

Wilks. (*Pauses. Aside.*) Here's a time of it. (*To Blitzen.*) You failed to take my advice, and you see the result.

Mrs. B. Dear me, and you, too, advised him against this fatal step.

Wilks. I did madam.

Mrs. B. But he will hear no advice. Rash man. It is suicidal. (*To Wilks.*) Of course we know *your* conclusion.

Julia. And it is cruel to others who are innocent.

Wilks. (*Aside.*) What the nation has the conclusion of a man who has spent ten years among the savages of Colorado, to do with it?

Blitzen. (*Aside.*) Yes, to Gus—one of Darwin's links. (*Aloud.*) You mean young Gallivant I suppose. If his uncle can't take care of him, he had better send him to an asylum.

Mrs. B. Mr. Blitzen! How shockingly rude.

Enter GUS L. JULIA rushes into his arms, he kisses her.

(*Gus.*) Dear Julia, we arrived one train sooner than I expected.

Blitzen. (*Mistakes Gus for his nephew.*) Why, how are you my boy. You are always welcome in this house. (*Shakes hands cordially.*)

Gus. I'm quite well, thank you. How are you, sir?

Blitzen. First rate, first rate, my boy!

Gus. (*Aside to Julia.*) Ah dearest Julia, your father has relented. He must have found out something favorable to me. But your mother?

Julia. (*Aside.*) Pa surprises me. (*Aloud.*) Let me introduce you to ma, Mr. Gallivant.

Gus. Happy to meet you, Mrs Blitzen. (*They bow and shake hands.*)

Mrs. B. I am glad to welcome you here. (*Aside.*) Dear me! What a stupid blunder I made to-day.

Blitzen. (*To Wilks.*) How fond the young folks are of each other. She calls him her *gallant* just as she used to do, wife. I'm glad they have not forgotten old times.

Julia. (*Aside.*) What does pa mean?

Wilks. It seems they are mindful of former meetings. (*Aside.*) Another mistake. I'll wait for developements.

Gus. (*Aloud.*) My dear sir, I shall never forget those days. (*Aside to Julia.*) He has consented then.

Julia. (*Aside to Gus.*) He must have been impressed by your appearance. (*Aloud.*) Pa, it is strange— (*Hesitating.*) I mean—

Blitzen. Strange! What's strange, Julia?

Mrs. B. Your conduct and actions, Mr. Blitzen.

Blitzen. Nothing strange about it, if you refer to what passed a few minutes ago, *I've struck*, that's all. As I'm the head of this family, the family has struck.

Mrs. B. Then you mean to say, you've ruined us!

Wilks. No, made your fortune.

Mrs. B. (*Starting hopefully.*) Ah, indeed! Then you consent?

Wilks. Madam, I dont understand you. I have consented to nothing, I assure you. (*To Blitzen.*) Good. We'll pile up the dust.

Blitzen. That we will.

Mrs. B. What can he mean by piling up the dust? (*To Gus.*) Will you please explain what your uncle means by his strange conduct? He and Mr. Blitzen seem to understand each other, but for the life of me I can't fathom their meaning.

Gus. I was not aware that uncle had yet conferred with Mr. Blitzen.

Blitzen. We have, though, and its all right. He objected, but that made no difference. He'll come round sometime to see things as I do.

Gus. The deuce he did!

Wilks. His uncle! What has he to do with silver mining? Didn't you get news from Colorado?

Blitzen. No.

Wilks. Then we are not millionaires?

Blitzen. Not that I know of.

Wilks. You said we had *struck*.

Blitzen. I said *I* had struck.

Wilks. Concern it, why did you raise a fellow's hopes only to dash them to the ground! I thought you were talking of silver mines.

Mrs. B. Silver mines! Strikes! (*Glances around.*) Objections and agreements! Mr. Blitzen, are you crazy?

Blitzen. Not a bit of it. I never was saner in my life.

Gus. I doubt that, if you say you have consulted with my uncle, for he was at his hotel half an hour ago, and I am confident he never saw you in his life.

Blitzen. (*Astonished.*) Never saw me? Why, who are you, anyway? Wilks, isn't this your son John?

Wilks. I never saw him in my life!

Blitzen. You haven't. Then who are you? (*To Gus.*)

Gus. I am Augustus Gallivant. I came here to see your daughter Julia.

Blitzen. The devil you say! (*Dances around frantically.*) What have I done? I've actually shaken hands with that fellow, called him nephew, and played the dunce generally.

Mrs. B. You are right, M. B., when you say *played the dunce*. That's the only pertinent sentiment you've given utterance to in the last half hour.

Julia. Dear pa, what did you mean when you said you had made an agreement with dear Gus's uncle?

Blitzen. Mean? I said no such thing.

Mrs. B. And did you mean nothing in regard to compromising the lawsuit?

Blitzen. I compromised no lawsuit.

Mrs. B. Then, pray, what did you mean?

Blitzen. I meant that I'll stand no more of this confounded expense for toggery and nonsense that's of no use under the sun to anybody.

Mrs. B. And all this fuss is about *two new dresses*.

Blitzen. Exactly.

Mrs. B. And you have raised all this disturbance about paltry matter of expense for the clothing of your wife and daughter?

Blitzen. There was a last straw that broke—

Mrs. B. Mr. Blitzen!

Julia. Pa!

Blitzen. Yes, that broke Mr. Blitzen:

Enter SERVANT with telegram. MR. B. opens it and reads, shouts "hurrah," grasps WILKS by the hand.

Blitzen. (*Reads aloud.*) "Have struck a bonanza. Blitzen Brothers control the mine."

Wilks. Good! Good!

Mrs. B. We were always lucky.

Julia. That's just splendid! Isn't it, Gus?

Gus. Allow me to congratulate you on your good luck, Mr. Blitzen.

Blitzen. Thank you. I think I owe you an apology, Mr. Gallivant. I have not given you a fair chance by judging you, unheard.

Julia. Pa can't help but like you, Gus. Can you pa?

Blitzen. Well I'm about of your mind, Julia. I waive all objections, and consent.

Julia. } Oh thank you!
Gus. }

Blitzen. No thanks necessary. (*Aside.*) I'll save money by it in the end. Mrs. Blitzen, you may consider this strike ended unconditionally.

Mrs. B. Happy to do so, but you must come down handsomely by way of forfeits. Don't say no. It's settled.

Blitzen. All right, my dear. I'll run this family as long as I can on a silver mine, and then—

Wilks. You will strike again.

Blitzen. No, lease a gold mine.

CURTAIN.

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